

Shifting Waves

by Josh Gottry

Publisher: Drop 6 Media, Inc. (2002)
Duration: 3' 45"
Difficulty: Medium
Players: 10 players

Instrumentation:

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1) Bells | 8) Congas (2), Cowbell, Castanets, Bell Tree |
| 2) Vibraphone | 9) Triangle, Sus. Cymbal, Hand Claps, High-hat (share w/player 7), Bass Drum (share w/player 10), Mark Tree |
| 3) Chimes | 10) Bass Drum, Low Concert Tom, China Cymbal, Ride Cymbal, Cabasa |
| 4) Xylophone | |
| 5) Marimba 1 | |
| 6) Marimba 2 | |
| 7) High-hat, Tamb., Wood Block, Snare | |

Composer Notes:

Shifting Waves is a combination of continually changing ostinatos. The first marimba serves as the rhythmic and melodic focus of the piece as it combines two- and three-note patterns in 6/8 and later two- and five-note patterns in 5/4, all over constant eighth notes. After a brief lyrical interlude in the middle of the ensemble, the texture of the piece begins to gradually thicken. Lighter sounds (i.e. high hat, wood block) are systematically replaced with heavier sounds (snare drum, bass drum, etc.), leading to a strong reprise of the opening figure and a unison conclusion.

Formal Structure:

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| m. 1: Introduction | m. 101: C Section (repeated 2 times adding texture) |
| m. 17: A Section | m. 149: B Section reprise |
| m. 29: Transition (B section material) | m. 157: Transition (A section material) |
| m. 37: B Section (repeated 3 times adding texture) | m. 161: Introduction reprise |
| m. 69: Transition (B section material) | m. 173: A Section reprise |
| m. 73: Continued Transition (A section material) | m. 185: Coda |
| m. 97: Percussion Interlude | |

Historical/Stylistic Considerations:

Written in a minimalistic style, this piece repeatedly shifts between compound and simple time signatures and, while the melody is present, it is often masked by other more active lines or embellished with ostinato-type material in the same voice. Rhythmic material is presented repeatedly on a variety of instruments and in continually changing textures.

Technical Elements:

Intermediate 4-mallet technique is required in the vibraphone and both marimba parts. The other mallet percussion parts require two mallets only, but do include double stops, fairly rapid passage work, and some significant interval leaps. All the non-pitched percussion parts require multiple instruments be performed by one player, but each allows reasonable time for instrument switches. The conga part incorporates both open and slap sounds and there are a few flam and accent passages in the first percussion part.

Musical Elements:

This composition is set clearly in B major with no chromatic alterations. The piece alternates between compound and simple meter, but with a constant eighth-note pulse requiring the players to be comfortable with metric modulation. There is one ritardando at the end of the piece and most of the dynamics are presented in ensemble.

Teaching Points:

- **Point 1 – Metric Modulation:** Marimba 1 and 2 m. 35-38

Musical score for Marimba 1 (M1) and Marimba 2 (M2), measures 35-38. The score is in 5/4 time. M1 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and M2 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The music features a metric modulation from 5/4 to 5/4.

- **Point 2 – Symmetrical Groups in Asymmetrical Meter:** Xylophone m. 149-150 and Perc. 2 m.37-38

Musical score for Xylophone, measures 149-150. The score is in 5/4 time with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A circled 'L' symbol is above the first measure.

Musical score for Percussion 2, measures 37-38. The score is in 5/4 time with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A circled 'C' symbol is above the first measure, labeled "cowbell".

- **Point 3 – Additive Rhythmic Combinations:** Marimba 1 m. 1-2; 37-38

Musical score for Marimba 1, measures 1-2. The score is in 6/8 time with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

Musical score for Marimba 1, measures 37-38. The score is in 5/4 time with a mezzo-forte (*mp*) dynamic. A circled 'C' symbol is above the first measure.